PROPERTY PLANNING COMMON ELEMENTS

COMPONENTS OF MASTER PLANS

RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

Swimming in Lakes and Rivers

Desired Experiences and Site Selection Considerations

This activity involves entering waterbodies for swimming, wading or otherwise interacting with the water. Swimming in natural water bodies can provide cooling on hot summer days, an introduction to water-based recreation, and interaction with aquatic plants and animals. Lakes and rivers with good swimming potential have a uniform slope (between a ratio of 1:3 and 1:10) to a water depth of five feet with a sandy bottom. If there is a designated swim area, the associated beach area should be as large or larger than the swim area. A grass area with partial shade is best located in close proximity to the beach.

Poor water quality, sharp rocky substrate, silty/mucky substrate, cold water temperatures, and dense aquatic vegetation can deter swimming. Swimmers can disrupt fishing activities or become an obstacle to boaters and small water craft users. Creating a beach area for swimmer access can eliminate shore habitat for aquatic species.

Notable Differences in Participation or Opportunities Across the State

This activity occurs in waterbodies across the state, typically at parks with beach access to the water. Higher participation occurs in more populated areas at urban parks and in northern vacation areas.

Notable Times of the Year of High or Low Participation

This activity occurs almost exclusively in the summer when water temperatures are favorable.

Participation

Participation Rate and Frequency

Based on a 2016 survey of Wisconsin residents conducted for the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), it is estimated that 54% of adult Wisconsin residents participate in swimming in lakes and rivers. These ranked #10 out of 64 activities evaluated.

Days/year	% of Lake and River Swimmers
1 to 2	29
3 to 9	41
10 to 29	20
30 or more	10
Total	**100%**

In terms of frequency, participants that engaged in swimming in lakes and rivers did so more frequently than participants in most other activities (it ranked #21 in frequency out of 64 activities evaluated). Given that the season for outdoor swimming is limited, this under represents the actual frequency of participation based on available days.

Estimated Trends

Swimming in lakes and rivers is one of the most popular recreation activities, both in Wisconsin and throughout the country. Nationally, swimming is predicted to remain popular and have an over 3% growth in participation by 2030 (White et al. 2016).

Demographics

As can be seen from the SCORP survey results in the table below, participants in lake and river swimming in Wisconsin tend to be well represented across age groups and about evenly split between genders and place of residence.

Demographic Category	Demographic Group	% Participation Rate Within Demographic Category	% Composition of Demographic Category (sums to 100%)
Age	18-29	69	27
	30-39	70	24
	40-49	63	17
	50-59	51	17
	60-69	33	10
	70 and older	24	5
	Total	--	**100**
Gender	Female	51	48
	Male	56	52
	Total	--	**100**
Residence	Rural	53	49
	Urban	55	51
	Total	--	**100**

References

White, E.M., J.M. Bowker, A.E. Askew, L.L. Langner, J.R. Arnold, and D.B.K. English. 2016. *Federal Outdoor Recreation Trends: Effects on Economic Opportunities*. United States Department of Agriculture.